

~~SECRET~~

OCI No. 1823/63

25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
21 May 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Insurgency in Laos

1. Skirmishing in the Plaine des Jarres has stepped up. A communiqué issued on 21 May by the premier's office in Vientiane cited reports from Kong Le of increased Communist pressure on his neutralist forces. The communiqué also said that two additional Communist battalions--presumably referring to North Vietnamese elements--had been brought into action. Kong Le continues to report heavy participation of North Vietnamese forces in the Plaine des Jarres fighting. Although this is not substantiated, the introduction of additional North Vietnamese forces, over and above cadre elements now operating with the Pathet Lao, is likely if fighting escalates and the Pathet Lao-dissident neutralist position appears endangered.

2. There are now four Lao army battalions supporting Kong Le in the Plaine des Jarres. It is unlikely that the Communists will long countenance the growing involvement of Phoumi and Meo troops in so-called liberated territory. However, the Communists may be delaying any large-scale offensive action until the rains make it impossible for Kong Le to move his armor in the Plaine des Jarres.

3. Meanwhile, the Communists are improving their positions for possible simultaneous actions in central and southern Laos. Concurrently, Communist propaganda is attempting to build a strong case for blaming any resumption of civil war in Laos on the "aggressive designs" of Souvanna, Phoumi, and the US.

~~SECRET~~

25X1